



## THE CSQ CALLS ON THE PRIME MINISTER TO PREVENT A DEMOBILIZATION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN THIS TIME OF CRISIS

**After responding in good faith to Prime Minister François Legault's outstretched hand for an accelerated negotiation of the public sector's collective agreements, the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) regrets the lack of flexibility and negotiability of the framework imposed by the Treasury Board.**

That framework consists of renewing the public sector's collective agreements for a three-year period before March 31, 2020, bringing forward only the government's priorities. Hence, the CSQ declares that, in regard to the mandate it received from its representatives, it cannot engage in the process imposed by the government.

### Not making the economic and social crisis worse

The CSQ highlights that, in the current coronavirus fight context, the government has the crucial duty to generate the commitment, mobilization and engagement of thousands of public sector workers, in particular those on the front lines. An imposed three-year straightjacket on the employees' back wouldn't help the current situation at all.

"The difficulties experienced in the field before the coronavirus outbreak didn't disappear in healthcare, education and higher education. Solutions to these difficulties are still needed, reminds the CSQ's president, Sonia Ethier. We are sounding the alarm about the severe consequences that the status quo, or even a decline of the public sector's personnel working conditions, as the government offers, would bring. We believe those solutions deserve that we take the time to properly examine them, once the pandemic is over."

### Very little to improve the employees' fate

While the March 31, 2020, deadline draws near, hour by hour, the government still refuses to send a signal to say that the premiums coming to term tomorrow will be renewed. The Centrale notes that the Treasury Board asks for a blank check of the public sector by asking it to consent ahead of time to undefined parameters..



After many discussions, the government sadly still hasn't offered a complete proposal to improve the fate of the "guardian angels" and that of other workers serving the population, including in the education sector. Moreover, the government isn't showing any openness to the counter-offers.

"The crisis concerns everyone and calls on responsibility on the part of the unions and the employer. Sadly, unless a significant change happens, the discussions with the Treasury Board point to nothing but an attempt to impose setbacks in healthcare, education and higher education personnel's working conditions. We went to the end of our commitment, to the extent of our General Negotiation Council's mandate," adds Sonia Ethier.

### **The decent thing to do: manage the crisis and extend the collective agreements**

In this context, the CSQ president calls on Prime Minister François Legault to do the only responsible thing in the current context: extend the collective agreements while the crisis is addressed and quickly grant premiums to the personnel mobilized in maintaining essential services to fight against the pandemic.

"The whole of Quebec is on hold to save human lives. In a time of general confinement and isolation, negotiating three-year collective agreements for 550,000 people in a few hours is not a profitable option nor is it responsible, neither for the government, the public services nor the population. The only emergency that exists is to decently manage a serious crisis in the best interest of all Quebecers, and that includes the public sector's workers," concludes Sonia Ethier.

## **REMINDER OF THE FACTS**

After the Treasury Board offered, on March 13, 2020, to suspend the negotiations for a few weeks, Quebec's Prime Minister invited, on March 15, 2020, trade unions to accept an accelerated negotiation framework with the goal of "ensuring industrial peace with the public sector's employees" in the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic context.

The negotiation basis submitted by the Prime Minister himself included three-year salary raises barely corresponding to the cost of living increase, as well as special premiums for the personnel deployed in the fight against coronavirus.

On the basis of this proposal, the CSQ obtained from its negotiation body, on March 25, the mandate to present a counter-offer respectful of the spirit of the government offer.



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